

Warning: embrace online retailing or bust

In the wake of Angus & Robertson's demise, Adelaide-based online software development company, Deadline, warns many more businesses will be pushed out of the market, if online retailing isn't embraced.

Statistics show that 90 per cent of consumers will research a product or service online before they visit a 'bricks and mortar' shop and for less than a third of the cost to set up than a physical shopfront, online is a very cost-effective and appealing way to reach customers.

Deadline's Managing Director, Sean Heylen, believes a virtual shopfront is now just as vital as its physical counterpart.

"In the corporate world, if you fail to meet your customers demands they'll find someone else who can – why should providing online accessibility in retail be an exception to this rule?" Sean said.

"From a consumer's perspective the variety, ease and availability of online access trumps pounding the pavement or standing in a queue in your lunch break, whereas for a business, the exposure to a worldwide customer base and the opportunity to build strong brand loyalty and engagement is exceptional."

With more than 9.6 million active Internet subscribers in Australia at June 2010, and a further 3.5 million accessing the Internet with mobile wireless devices such as smartphones, consumers have shifted the way in which they choose to access and receive information and services.

"Consumers are increasingly doing things on the go, including shopping, and Deadline is increasingly making websites mobile compatible so people can easily browse online via their phone," Sean said.

When it comes to online, Sean says that while anything is possible, not everything is profitable, and it's vital that a business has a good online strategy to support business objectives.

"The most effective online solution is one that doesn't add to the time invested, but instead helps a business streamline processes to ultimately deliver the best return on investment," Sean said.

"We are regularly seeing customers going beyond basic website development, we're creating apps, social media hubs, online shopping portals and automated back end procedures – understanding what will have the greatest return on investment for a business varies, so we never take a one-size-fits-all approach."

Sean says the top three technology trends for retailers in 2011 will be:

1. **Mobile payments** – apps or add-ons to your phone that enable you to pay using your phone or use it like a credit card.
2. **Location-based services** – more retailers are taking advantage of Google Places, Four Square and other location-based services so customers can check in via their mobile device and receive discounts or special offers or simply been 'seen' at a particular location.
3. **Shopping and trading portals** – while not a new trend, portals are surging in popularity. These days, portals are set up to trade contacts, advice and information online.

ABOUT DEADLINE

Deadline was established in 1996 and is one of South Australia's leading online software development companies. Creating custom online business solutions, Deadline helps its clients do business online and create their own unique online space. For more information visit www.deadline.net.au

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